

Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan

Wuthering Heights

Subject

Literature

Grade level

9-12

Duration

Three or four class periods

Objectives

Students will

- read the novel *Wuthering Heights*;
- review summary of the novel's plot and major characters;
- analyze a theme; and
- teach a theme-based unit to the class.

Materials

- *Wuthering Heights* (one for each student)
- Computer with Internet access
- Poster board, markers, and other materials for creating visuals

Procedures

1. After students have read *Wuthering Heights*, review its plot and major characters with the class. You may choose to ask students to summarize each chapter. Write the names of characters on the board as they are introduced. When each chapter has been summarized, ask the class to brainstorm words and phrases that describe the characters.
2. Divide the class into two groups and assign each one a theme (see step #3). Explain that each group must answer questions about their theme. Then each group will have one class period to prepare a unit on their theme and another class period to teach it to the class.
3. Give each group the questions below:

Theme: The Role of Social Class

- Describe the social class of the Earnshaws, the Lintons, and Heathcliff. Which are of a higher social class? Why is this significant?
- How does social class motivate Catherine's actions? How does she try to change her class?
- How does Heathcliff's social class influence the way he is treated and his own actions? How does Heathcliff's class change?
- What is the role of class in the novel? How do tensions in the book result from class struggles?
- What role do the servants Nelly, Joseph, and Zillah play in the novel?

Theme: The Significance of Setting

- Describe the setting of the Yorkshire moors.
 - Describe the houses Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Include descriptions of architecture and the surrounding landscape.
 - How do the houses reflect their inhabitants?
 - Do the houses symbolize their inhabitants? Give examples.
 - How do the settings influence the novel's characters?
4. Have student groups develop a unit based on their theme. Each should begin with an overview of the theme; answers to the questions above should suffice. Each unit will also include a creative or visual presentation, such as posters or drawings, a reenactment of a scene, or a presentation of modern parallels. The groups should prepare questions that will encourage the class to participate in a discussion.
 5. Have each group teach their theme-based unit.

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions; gave thorough and clear summaries of the plot and character descriptions; developed creative, thoughtful units on a theme that answered all questions provided.

2 points: Students participated in class discussions; gave adequate summaries of the plot and character descriptions; developed units on a theme that answered some of the questions provided.

1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; gave incomplete summaries of the plot or character descriptions; developed units on a theme that answered few or none of the questions provided.

Vocabulary

moor

Definition: A wide open area of high land that is usually too wet for farming

Context: The writers Emily, Charlotte, and Ann Brontë lived on the moors in Yorkshire, England.

plot

Definition: The pattern of events or main story in a narrative or drama

Context: As the chief narrator, Nelly recounts the many twists and turns of the novel's plot.

setting

Definition: The environment in which a story takes place

Context: Emily Brontë's environment of desolate windswept expanses is the setting of *Wuthering Heights*.

social class

Definition: People having the same social or economic status

Context: Despite her love for Heathcliff, Catherine married Edgar Linton to enter a higher social class.

wuthering

Definition: A local term describing the fierce and wild winds that blow during storms on the moors

Context: In the novel, the house was named Wuthering Heights because it was exposed to the moor's harsh weather.

National Standards

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching English language arts, with the goal of promoting literacy. To become a member of the NCTE, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.ncte.org/standards/standards.shtml>

This lesson plan addresses the following standards:

- Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Credit

Joy Brewster, curriculum writer, editor, and consultant